

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 AGRE-00 USIA-15 AID-05 EUR-12 COME-00  
ISO-00 TRSE-00 OIC-02 L-03 /058 W  
-----231708Z 008109 /50  
P 231356Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4806

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FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: FAO, EAGR, UNWFC  
SUBJ: REPORT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL PREPARATORY MEETING

REF : STATE 116890

PER REFTTEL, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF WFC/L.19/ADD.4 ON POLICIES  
AND PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE NUTRITION. BEGIN TEXT:

45. THE PREPARATORY MEETING CONSIDERED THIS ISSUE ON THE  
BASIS OF DOCUMENT WFC/41 SUPPLEMENTED BY DOCUMENT WFC/45. AT  
ITS SECOND SESSION THE COUNCIL HAD REQUESTED THE SECRETARIAT  
TO PREPARE A FIRST REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION  
V OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE ON POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO  
IMPROVE NUTRITION; INCLUDING PROPOSALS FOR EXPEDITING ACTION  
AND FOR INTEGRATING THE NUTRITION PLANS OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
AGENCIES INTO AN OVERALL PLAN OF ACTION ON NUTRITION.

46. DOCUMENT WFC/41 POINTED OUT THAT THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF RE-  
SOLUTION V WAS TO ENSURE ACTION DIRECTED AT NUTRITIONAL  
IMPROVEMENT FOR THE HUNGRY AND MALNOURISHED. A BEGINNING HAS  
BEEN MADE TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION V BUT PROGRESS  
HAS NOT MOVED FAR IN THE DIRECTION INTENDED BY THE CONFERENCE  
TOWARDS A CONCERTED APPROACH TO NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT FOR THE  
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MAJORITY OF THE MALNOURISHED. LAUNCHING A CONCERTED APPROACH  
WOULD REQUIRE THAT (I) GOVERNMENTS INTRODUCE NUTRITION IMPROVE-  
MENT AS A CLEAR AND DISTINCT GOAL OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS;  
(II) GOVERNMENTS DEVELOP FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGIES AS THE  
ESSENTIAL VEHICLE FOR NUTRITION INTEGRATION INTO THE DEVELOPMENT  
PROCESS, AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING AND IMPROVING NUTRITION  
AND HEALTH INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES, AND AS A TOOL TO NARROW

DOWN EXISTING GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE OF THE MAGNITUDE AND NATURE OF THE NUTRITION PROBLEM, AND TO RECONCILE DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT APPROPRIATE APPROACHES TO NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT WHICH PRESENTLY IMPEDE ACTION; (III) THAT THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM DEVELOP MANAGERIAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO ASSIST GOVERNMENTS EFFECTIVELY WHICH AT PRESENT, IS INADEQUATE; (IV) THAT THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN TRANSLATING THE BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS OF RESOLUTION V INTO A FLEXIBLE BUT SPECIFIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE NEXT FIVE TO TEN YEARS LINKED TO OTHER ONGOING POVERTY-ORIENTED APPROACHES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND BASIC NEEDS.

47. THE DOCUMENT ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF FAO AND IN CO-OPERATION WITH NON-UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS, PREPARE SUCH A PLAN FOR THE COUNCIL'S FIFTH SESSION, WITH AN INTERIM REPORT, INCLUDING IMMEDIATE ACTION PROPOSALS, TO BE SUBMITTED TO ITS FOURTH SESSION. IT PROPOSED THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD PLAY A CATALYTIC ROLE IN LINKING UNITED NATIONS ACTION TO THE MUCH LARGER EFFORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THAT IT SECURE THE POLITICAL SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR IMMEDIATE NUTRITION ACTIVITIES AND FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN. THIS WOULD REQUIRE A SPECIAL EFFORT BY THE COUNCIL OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AND TO THIS END THE DOCUMENT SUGGESTED THAT THE COUNCIL ESTABLISH AN AD HOC GROUP OF FIVE MINISTERS WHO WOULD INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN A PERSONAL WAY AS WELL AS IN THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN AND ENSURE ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

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48. THE PREPARATORY MEETING AGREED UNANIMOUSLY ON THE HIGH PRIORITY FOR A MAJOR EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTION V. IT STRESSED THAT THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT RESTS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND THAT GOVERNMENTS NEEDED TO INTRODUCE NUTRITION OBJECTIVES IN BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE TERMS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT PLANS, SO AS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE OVER TIME THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE NUTRITION SITUATION. THE MEETING EMPHASIZED IN PARTICULAR THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATING THE FOOD CONSUMPTION/NUTRITION EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES ON THE POOREST POPULATION SEGMENTS. IT NOTED THAT SIMPLE INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS THE DESIGN OF FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGIES WERE AVAILABLE TO EVERY GOVERNMENT WISHING TO ADOPT A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT. THE MEETING UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN NUTRITION STRATEGIES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND BASIC NEEDS APPROACHES. PARTICULAR REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-RELIANCE OF THE POOR THROUGH IMPROVED

APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND TO THE IMPORTANT ROLE  
OF WOMEN IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE NUTRITION.

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49. WHILE EMPHASIZING THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS,  
THE MEETING ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE EFFORTS OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES HAVE NOT LIVED UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS  
OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. FOLLOW-UP TO EARLIER EFFORTS  
TO DEVELOP AGENCY CAPACITY IN ASSISTING GOVERNMENTS IN FOOD  
AND NUTRITION PLANNING HAD BEEN INADEQUATE. AGENCIES HAD YET  
TO INCLUDE NUTRITION OBJECTIVES IN THEIR WORK PROGRAMMES.  
THEY ALSO NEEDED TO WORK TOWARDS THE SYSTEMATIC ASSEMENT OF THE  
STATE OF WORLD NUTRITION.

50. RESERVATIONS WERE EXPRESSED ABOUT THE SECRETARIAT'S  
PROPOSAL FOR AN ACTION PLAN REFLECTING A FEAR THAT THIS MIGHT  
DIRECT RESOURCES FROM COUNTRY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE  
OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE. THE SECRETARIAT CLARIFIED ITS  
PROPOSAL, INDICATING THAT IT WAS CALLING FOR A CAREFULLY  
CONSIDERED OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME WHICH WOULD DEFINE THE STEPS  
TO BE TAKEN BY THE AGENCIES TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPACITY FOR  
ASSISTING AN INCREASING NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF NUTRITION POLICIES, WOULD IDENTIFY THE COMPOSITE NUTRITION  
INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES AND MEASURES NEEDED TO ERADICATE MICRO-  
NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES, AND WOULD RESOLVE THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS  
AND DISAGREEMENTS IN THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO  
NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT. THE SECRETARIAT FELT THAT ANSWERS TO  
THESE QUESTIONS AND A CLEAR MEASURE OF THE COST, TIME AND EFFORT  
NECESSARY TO LAUNCH A MAJOR COUNTRY-FOCUSED PROGRAMME FOR THE  
IMPROVEMENT OF NUTRITION, WERE ESSENTIAL TO PRACTICAL PROGRESS.  
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51. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSION CONCERNING IMPROVED CO-ORDINATION OF AGENCY NUTRITION ACTIVITIES, FAO INFORMED THE MEETING OF THE ACC PROPOSAL TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE 63RD SESSION OF ECOSOC IN JULY 1977, WHICH SUGGESTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF (I) AN ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, (II) AN ADVISORY GROUP ON NUTRITION OF SOME FIVE NUTRITION EXPERTS, AND (III) A SMALL SECRETARIAT WHICH WOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY FAO. THE SECRETARIAT NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED ACC CO-ORDINATION MECHANISM WOULD IN NO WAY SUBSTITUTE FOR AN URGENTLY NEEDED INTER-AGENCY ACTION MECHANISM. THE MEETING RECOMMENDED THAT THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL SECRETARIAT SHOULD FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE ACC SUB-COMMITTEE IF APPROVED BY ECOSOC.

52. THE MEETING FOCUSED ON THE CENTRAL ISSUE FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE MINISTERS: THE DEFINITION OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN LAUNCHING A MAJOR EFFORT FOR NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT. IT RECOMMENDED THAT A MAJOR ROLE OF THE COUNCIL CONSISTED IN EXERCISING ITS OVERVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RESPECT TO PROGRAMMES OF OTHER AGENCIES IN THE AREA OF NUTRITION THROUGH PERIODIC EVALUATION OF THE ADEQUACY OF AGENCY NUTRITION ACTIVITIES. ASSESSMENTS WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE AGENCIES AT THEIR REGULAR MEETINGS. IT ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD RECOMMEND TO ECOSOC THAT THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF ANY CO-ORDINATING MECHANISM WHICH ECOSOC MAY DECIDE UPON SHOULD EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL AS THE PRIMARY OVERSIGHT BODY FOR MATTERS DEALING WITH HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION.

53. THE MEETING DID NOT FEEL THAT THE CREATION OF A MINISTERIAL GROUP ON NUTRITION WAS NECESSARY FOR THE COUNCIL TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES EFFECTIVELY. MINISTERS MAY HOWEVER WISH TO CONSIDER THE SECRETARIAT'S PROPOSAL THAT THE COUNCIL IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS OVERSIGHT AND CO-ORDINATION RESPONSIBILITIES MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO STIMULATE GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY COMMITMENT, TO PLAY A CATALYTIC ROLE IN LINKING UNITED NATIONS ACTION TO

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THE MUCH LARGER EFFORT BY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES CONCERNED AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, AND TO HELP SECURE THE POLITICAL SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO ADVANCE IMMEDIATE NUTRITION ACTIVITIES AND ENSURE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A MAJOR LONGTERM EFFORT TO IMPROVE NUTRITION. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE MINISTERS WOULD NEED TO CONSIDER HOW THE COUNCIL COULD EXERCISE ITS FUNCTIONS MOST EFFECTIVELY. END TEXT.GARDNER

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